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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 VILNIUS 000591

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR G/TIP, EUR/NB, INL, DRL, PRM, IWI

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SMIG](#) [LH](#)  
SUBJECT: LITHUANIA RESPONSIVE TO TIP REPORT

REF: A. STATE 85553 B. VILNIUS 520

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1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Our interlocutors here positively appraised the 2006 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report and reftel points. The report's recommendations have already inspired the GOL to implement measures to improve anti-trafficking efforts. The GOL is also working on a comprehensive strategy to combat trade in humans that includes strengthening a national anti-TIP coordination plan that enhances coordination between local and national officials. The release of the 2006 TIP report received broad press coverage in Lithuania, and we continue to highlight this issue in our public outreach. END SUMMARY.

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Lithuania responds to TIP report  
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2. (SBU) Lithuania's National Coordinator for Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Strategy, Igoris Bazylevas, told us that the GOL assessed the 2006 TIP report as objective and useful on the whole. He outlined steps the GOL planned to take as a result of the report's suggestions. In response to the report, he said, the Ministry will include judges in the TIP awareness training program for law enforcement officials and prosecutors. Bazylevas also told us that the Interior Ministry has allocated funds under the National TIP prevention strategy to establish an official screening and referral process to transfer victims to institutions providing assistance, a need highlighted in the 2005 and 2006 TIP reports. He added that, in January 2006, Lithuania established a specialized TIP police unit which has already engaged in both international and domestic investigations, a reform initiated in response to the 2005 TIP report.

3. (SBU) Bazylevas took issue with only one statement in the report, saying that he was "skeptical" that 10 to 20 percent of persons working in prostitution are under the age of 18. Audra Sipaviciene, head of the Vilnius International Organization for Migration, told us she also thought that the number, as a percentage of all prostitutes, was too high, although 16 percent of those victims who sought IOM's help in 2005 were minors.

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Lithuania consolidating TIP strategy  
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4. (SBU) Bazylevas emphasized the need for an overall coordinated strategy to combat trafficking in Lithuania and

described plans to strengthen the national coordination plan to combat human trafficking. The State Secretary (the ranking non-political civil servant) of the Interior Ministry will become the country's official representative to combat TIP. (The TIP coordinator position currently belongs to the Deputy Head of the Public Security Department). The GOL will establish TIP prevention coordination groups in all ten counties in Lithuania to fight TIP on the local level. These groups will include officials from municipalities, police, NGOs and other organizations and will concentrate on developing a coordinated approach to TIP.

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New information initiatives  
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¶5. (SBU) Bazylevas said that the Ministry of Social Affairs had established a specialized informational TIP prevention website targeted at persons seeking employment abroad. The Interior Ministry is planning to organize an international anti-TIP conference in the fall of 2006. Bazylevas also commented that the Ministry had increased funding to NGOs to spread information programs to at-risk youth, although he said many of the implementing NGOs need to build capacity to reach their targets more effectively.

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Embassy efforts  
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¶6. (SBU) This Mission continues to highlight anti-TIP efforts in public outreach. Our July 4 event will feature a leader of an organization dedicated to combating TIP and providing services to victims as a special guest. The Charge will publicly recognize the importance of her work and the anti-TIP struggle writ large in a speech to high-level government officials and other attendees.

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Comment: Lithuania responsive to TIP report  
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¶7. (SBU) Lithuania continues to take TIP seriously. The Interior Ministry's attention to the 2006 report is serious and credible, and the GOL is taking concrete steps to address specific recommendations. The appointment of the Interior Ministry's second-in-command as the national anti-Trafficking point person is a testament to Lithuania's political will to address the scourge of human trafficking.  
KELLY